

In the Claims:

1-7. (Canceled).

8. (Currently Amended) Fuel cell stack, comprising:

a plurality of fuel cell elements and

a plurality of separating plates, a respective one of the separating plates being located between a respective pair of fuel cell elements,

at least one inside supply channel being provided to supply a combustion gas and at least one inside discharge channel being provided to discharge an exhaust gas, said channels extending in a direction in which the fuel cell elements and separating plates are stacked,

a supply of combustion gas on a ~~first~~ top side of the fuel cell elements and a supply of oxidizer on a bottom side of the fuel cell elements,

wherein, on the top side of the fuel cell elements, there are provided:

- a plurality of parallel lengthwise channels for routing of the combustion gas,
- a distributor zone which connects the supply channel to first ends of the lengthwise channels, and
- a collecting zone which connects the discharge channel to second ends of the lengthwise channels, and

wherein oxidizer guide channels are provided at the bottom side of the fuel cell elements for routing the oxidizer parallel to the direction of the lengthwise channels, the oxidizer guide channels being open to sides of the fuel cell stack for supplying of the oxidizer, wherein the oxidizer guide channels and the lengthwise channels are laterally offset relative to each other.

9. (Previously Presented) Fuel cell stack as claimed in claim 8, wherein the at least one supply channel and the at least one discharge channel are located in an area at one side of the fuel cell stack.

10. (Previously Presented) Fuel cell stack as claimed in claim 8, wherein the at least one supply channel and the at least one discharge channel are arranged by diagonally opposite corners of the fuel cell stack.

11. (Previously Presented) Fuel cell stack as claimed in claim 8, wherein the distributor zone tapers from the supply channel along the first ends of the lengthwise channels and the collecting zone tapers from the discharge channel along the second ends of the lengthwise channels.

12. (Previously Presented) Fuel cell stack as claimed in claim 8, wherein the distributor zone and the collecting zone are made symmetrical with respect to the fuel cell elements.

13. (Previously Presented) Fuel cell stack as claimed in claim 8, wherein the distributor zone and the collecting zone are provided with cooling surfaces.

14. (Previously Presented) Fuel cell stack as claimed in claim 8, wherein at least one of the distributor zone and the collecting zone have heat exchange surfaces by which heat energy is transferable between the combustion gas and the oxidizer.

15. (Previously Presented) Fuel cell stack as claimed in claim 8, wherein the top and bottom sides face in opposite directions toward a respective separating plate.

16. (Previously Presented) Fuel cell stack as claimed in claim 8, wherein the oxidizer guide channels are provided directly in a surface of the separating plate located between each respective pair of fuel cell elements.

17. (New) Fuel cell stack as claimed in claim 8, wherein the at least one supply channel and the at least one discharge channel are located in an area laterally to the same side of the parallel lengthwise channels and are connected there to via the distributor zone and the collecting zone, respectively.